Use of grainland for non-form purpose

478. SHRI JAGMOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how much grainland has been lost to non—farm uses during the period 1982-1992;

(b) how much grainland has been converted into high value speciality crops; and

(c) what measures are being taken to ensure that the area of grainland per person is not reduced and the poor are not subjected to further deprivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) There is only marginal decline of 0.8 million hectares in the total cultivable area which declined from 185.2 million hectares in 1981-82 to 184.4 million hectares in 1991-92.

(b) The area under foodgrains declined from 129.7 million hectares in 1981-82 to 128.0 million hectares in 1990.91, as per Land Use Statistics, showing a decline of about 1.7 million hectares during this period. During the same period, there is an increase of around 1.38 million hectares of areas under high value crops of fruits and vegetables which increased from 5.08 million hectares to 6.46 million hectares.

(c) The land being fixed, the per capita grain land is likely to be reduced over the years with the increase in population. However, the programmes are being implemented to increase the cultivated area through reclamation of culturable wasteland and reducing the fallow land by extending the irrigation facilities. Further, various crop production oriented programmes are being implemented to increase the productivity per unit of area to maximise the return from the available land resources.

Butter Oil

479. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed the import of butter oil by National Dairy Development Board at concessional import duty;

(b) the rates at which the butter oil will be imported and the concession allowed on such import;

(c) whether butter oil and power milk is at the same time allowed to be exported so as to facilitate Indian dairy farmers to compete in the international market; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The rate of import of butter oil depends upon the quantity available and the international prices prevailing at the time of import. The rate at present ranges from US$ 1600 to 1770 per MT. The concession granted by the Goverment to the National Dairy Development Board for import is reduction in custom duty from 40 per cent to 20 per cent.

(c) and (d) There is no question of exporting butter oil as the same is not manufactured in India. However, milk powder is permitted for export through APEDA.

Desertification of Land

480. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 40 per cent of land in the country suffers from desertification:

(b) what is the percentage of land that has been treated so far by various measures; and